

**REVISED STAFF REPORT:** 3/16/2022 SPECIAL MEETING      **PREPARED BY:** J. ROSS  
**ADDRESS:** 1501 WASHINGTON (313 PARK AVENUE)  
**APPLICATION NO:** #22-7705  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT:** GRAND CIRCUS PARK  
**APPLICANT:** PETER BURGOYNE  
**OWNER:** PETER BURGOYNE  
**DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT:** 3/11/2022  
**DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION:** 2/14/2022

**SCOPE:** ALLOW MULTI-COLOR CHANGEABILITY AT FRONT ELEVATION LED LIGHTING; INSTALL SYNTHETIC GREEN WALL; & ADD CHANGEABLE ART TO FRONT AND SIDE ELEVATION PARAPET

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Erected in 2019-2020, 1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue) is a mixed-use building which includes commercial space at the first story and residential units in stories two through seven. The building features a triangular footprint with an interior courtyard area. The roof is flat and exterior walls are clad with brick, metal panel, and cement fiber siding. Aluminum storefronts are located at the first story while fixed and operable aluminum windows are located at the residential units.



**1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue), current appearance**

## PROPOSAL

This body approved the design for 1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue) at its ~~October~~ **December 9, 2015** regular meeting. Please note that the proposal included the location of perforated metal cladding at the building's front elevation per the below drawing and material sample photo, **but did not include the installation of lighting at this location:**



Application materials, 2015 showing front elevation



Permit drawings, approved by HDC staff in 2017. The note for the siding states "provide backlighting of perforated metal panel."

In 2021 HDC staff noted that changeable LED, multiple-colored lighting had been installed behind the front elevation perforated metal panel.



**1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue), front elevation showing unapproved changeable colored lighting**

Please note that the approved permit drawings did not allow for changeable/multicolored lighting. HDC staff has also noted that synthetic greenery had been added to several areas at the front and side elevation, first story. This element has not been approved by the HDC.

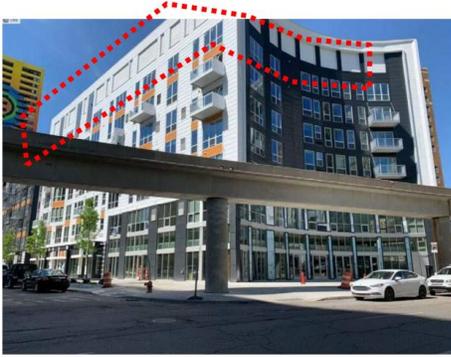


**1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue), side elevation showing unapproved synthetic greenery**



**1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue), detail, unapproved synthetic greenery**

With the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to retain the synthetic greenery as installed. The applicant is also seeking the Commission's approval to display colored lighting at the front elevation for a specific number of days throughout 2022. Finally, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to utilize the parapet area at the front and side elevations (see the below) for the installation of changeable art/murals.



**Areas which shall accommodate murals/art pieces which could be removed/changed**

### **STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH**

- As previously noted, the 1501 Washington (313 Park Avenue) is new construction. The building's front elevation faces north, towards Grand Circus Park
- The current application proposes to display colored lighting at the building's front elevation on 45 specific days in 2022. The Commission has approved similar proposals in the past.
- Via its approval of Resolution #21-03, the Commission determined that seasonal/temporary lighting can be installed without review.
- As previously noted, the front façade lighting will be highly visible at night when viewed from Grand Circus Park. Note that the building is located in a largely commercial setting, within the City's downtown.

### **ISSUES**

- The current application only includes a calendar/schedule for 2022. It is unclear if the applicant plans to present a new colored lighting schedule each year
- Although the synthetic greenery is likely easily removal and the building has been recently constructed, it is unclear to staff if the element will weather well within Detroit's climate. The Commission typically does not approve the installation of PVC-based siding, fencing, etc. within historic districts due to their poor performance over time. Staff therefore recommends against this element as it is possible it is not compatible with the character of the building's historic surrounds.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Recommendation # 1 - Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Certificate of Appropriateness**

It is staff's recommendation that the Commission approve the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed changeable/colored lighting and art installation as proposed because it conforms to the Grand Circus Park Historic District's Elements of Design and meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. However, staff does recommend that the COA be issued with the following condition:

- The building's front elevation shall only display colored/non-white lights for no more than 45 days each calendar year.

**Recommendation # 2 - Section 21-2-78. Determination of the Historic District Commission – Certificate of Appropriateness**

It is staff's recommendation that the Commission deny the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed synthetic greenery because it does not conform to the Grand Circus Park Historic District's Elements of Design nor does it meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular, SOI's standard # 9.) *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*